



**CRITICISM OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOCIETY
REPRESENTED IN “YOU AND YOUR WHOLE
RACE” BY LANGSTON HUGHES**

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For S-1 Degree in Literature

In English Department, Faculty of Humanities

Universitas Diponegoro

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SEMARANG**

2019

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly states that the project entitled *Criticism of African-American Society Represented in “You and Your Whole Race” by Langston Hughes* is compiled by himself without taking any result from other research in S-1, S-2, S-3 degree and in diploma of any university. The writer ascertains also that he did not quote any material from other publications except from the reference mentioned.

Semarang, July 2019

Hernanda Bayu Wicaksana

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

I just try to live every day as if I've deliberately come back to this one day to enjoy it as if it was the full final day of my extraordinary, ordinary life.

Tim Lake

Get busy living, or get busy dying..

Andy Dufresne

*I dedicated this Final Project
to my beloved family and my
friends who always support
me everytime.*

APPROVAL
CRITICISM OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOCIETY
REPRESENTED IN *YOU AND YOUR WHOLE RACE*
BY LANGSTON HUGHES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to God, who has given strength and true spirit so this thesis on *Criticism of African-American Society Represented in “You and Your Whole Race” by Langston Hughes* came to a completion. On this occasion, I would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the completion of this research report.

The deepest gratitude and appreciation are extended to Drs. Jumino, M.Lib.M.Hum – my advisor who has given her continuous guidance, helpful correction, moral support, advice, and suggestion, without which it is doubtful that this thesis came into completion.

My deepest thank also goes to the following:

1. Dr. Nurhayati, M. Hum as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University;
2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A as The Head of English Department Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University;
3. My father, my mother, and my brother who always support me everytime;
4. All the lecturers (especially those who teach Literature) for teaching and giving me knowledge;
5. Ikha Nathalia Puspitasari who always supports me during my study;
6. My lovely best friends, all members of Pascol who always support me in my lowest condition;
7. All my fellow students from 2015, especially those in Literature class;

I realize that this final project is still far from perfection. I, therefore will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this thesis better.

Finally, I expect this project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about racial discrimination.

Semarang, July 2019

Hernanda Bayu Wicaksana

ABSTRAK

Diskriminasi ras telah menjadi rahasia umum di negara-negara multikultural. Kaum kulit hitam yang hidup di Amerika Serikat merupakan korban dari diskriminasi ras yang sudah berlangsung sejak lama. Puisi “*You and Your Whole Race*” yang ditulis oleh Langston Hughes, menyiratkan bagaimana kehidupan orang kulit hitam yang tertindas dan tidak dapat hidup dengan layak akibat diskriminasi oleh orang kulit putih. Penulis menemukan unsur intrinsik metafor dan *imagery* yang terdapat dalam puisi tersebut. Selain unsur intrinsik, penulis juga menemukan unsur ekstrinsik didalam puisi tersebut adalah diskriminasi ras serta kritik terhadap orang kulit hitam itu sendiri. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian perpustakaan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa diskriminasi yang melanda orang kulit hitam telah menyulitkan kehidupan mereka dan membatasi hak mereka untuk mendapat kesetaraan serta kritik keras kepada orang kulit hitam itu sendiri yang tidak berusaha untuk melawan ketidakadilan yang menimpa mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Diskriminasi, Ras, Kulit Hitam, Langston Hughes, Ketidaksetaraan*

ABSTRACT

Racial discrimination has become a public secret in multicultural countries. The Blacks living in the United States are victims of racial discrimination which has been going on for a long time. In the poem “*You and Your Whole Race*” written by Langston Hughes, it implies how the black people were oppressed, and they could not live properly due to discrimination by the white people. The author found the intrinsic metaphor and imagery in the poem. The author also found the extrinsic element in the poem to be racial discrimination and criticism of black people themselves. The method used in this study is library research. The results of this study show that the discrimination that inflicts blacks in the United States has made it difficult for their lives and limits their right to equality and strong criticism of black people themselves who are not trying to fight the injustices that befall them.

Keywords: *discrimination; race; black skin; Langston Hughes; inequality*

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Many poems show the oppression that forces African-American to be slave for the white, not giving a chance to have a better life and live like an animal. As time went by, the slavery era was slowly decreased, but discrimination is still happening everywhere. White people assume that the black has lower social status than them. “You and Your Whole Race” is poem by Langston Hughes which show racial discrimination of African-American by the whites that makes their life become harder because every aspect of things that can make the black blocked and the mindset of the black that they choose to surrender with the condition that makes their life become harder.

This paper will discuss about the racial discrimination and how the author wants to critic African-American habit that does not have spirit to fight for their freedom and accept their destiny as the second class society and how Langston Hughes believes that someday the blacks can reach their dream to be equal with everyone and live a better life.

1.2. Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What are the intrinsic elements in “You and Your Whole Race by Langston Hughes”.
2. What are the extrinsic elements in “You and Your Whole Race” by Langston Hughes.

1.3. Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the intrinsic elements such as metaphor and imagery in “You and Your Whole Race” by Langston Hughes.
2. To the extrinsic elements such as racial discrimination in “You and Your Whole Race” by Langston Hughes.

1.4. Methods of the Study

In order to do research, method of research is needed to develop, find, and test the correctness of the research. To collect the data, the writer uses library research by collecting and sorting the data sourced from library and internet from website related to this paper. Library research is use to locate and identify factual information and/or a opinion of experts on necessary components such as methods and theories (George, 2008:6).

The writer uses intrinsic and extrinsic approach to analyze the poem “ You and Your Whole Race”, intrinsic approach is theoretical approach implied to the poem. The poem has lot intrinsic aspects such as figurative language and the writer focuses on metaphor and symbol. Meanwhile, for the extrinsic element the writer is focused on racial discrimination based on the poem that talks about discrimination that happens to the African American in United States.

Besides, the writer uses sociology of literature to analyze this poem. Wellek and Warren (1949: 89) state that “Attempts are made to describe and define the influence of society on literature and to prescribe and judge the position of literature in society”.

The writer discusses the poem “You and Your Whole Race” into two parts. The first part describes the metaphor and imagery in “You and Your Whole Race”. In the second part, the writer analyzes the racial discrimination and criticism on black society aspect implied in the poem using sociological approach.

AUTHOR AND HIS WORK

2.1. Biography of Langston Hughes

Born in February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri, Langston Hughes in full James Mercer Langston Hughes, who was an important American writer figure in the Harlem Renaissance and focus on African American life's as subject of his writings, which ranged from poetry, novels, and newspaper columns

His parents separated soon after his birth, and he was raised by his mother and grandmother. After his grandmother's death, he and his mother moved to half a dozen cities before reaching Cleveland, where they settled. In 1920, Hughes graduated from high school and spent time with his father in Mexico.

While working as a busboy in a hotel in Washington, D.C., in late 1925, Hughes put three of his own poems beside the plate of Vachel Lindsay in the dining room. The next day, newspapers around the country reported that Lindsay, among the most popular white poets of the day, had "discovered" an African American busboy poet, which earned Hughes broader notice. Hughes received a scholarship to, and began attending, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in early 1926. That same year, he received the Witter Bynner Undergraduate Poetry Award, and he published "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" in *The Nation*, a manifesto in which he called for a confident, uniquely black literature. (Editors, 2014: p. 2-5)

2.2. Paraphrase of *You and Your Whole Race*

This poem *You and Your Whole Race* begins with the author talking to someone and the black race who lives in poverty. He asked them to see the city where they live and the white people who have a better life than them. This shows how African-American life is horrible compared with the whites. The author continues by saying that the environment of their race is horrible that the people surrender with poverty condition. Children are raised with no spirit of changes to be better. They just live behind desperation, the parents do not teach their children with education in order to be better person, Finally, the author challenges them to step forward, brave to face the evil world that tortures them and reach their freedom which means the African-American are brave enough to fight the discrimination that happens to them and prove that African-American are equal with the other.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Intrinsic Element

The writer found some intrinsic elements in the poem *You and Your Whole Race* by Langston Hughes. There are two intrinsic elements used to analyze as follows:

3.1.1. Metaphor

Almost every poem has metaphor to give the implied meaning using words, it shows the truth and makes the reader understand with the comparison. A metaphor compares two different things directly, whether implicitly or even explicitly (Mezzo, 1999:1). While Perrine (1969:65) states that "metaphor the comparison is implied—that is, the figurative term is substituted for or identified with the literal term". For example, there is a poem by John Donne "The Sun Rising":

*"She's all states, and **all** princes, I,"*

This line demonstrates the speaker's belief that he and his lover is richer than all states, kingdoms, and rulers in all the world because of the love that they share.

3.1.2. Imagery

X.J Kennedy (1979: 464) states "when speaking of imagery in poetry we generally mean a word or sequence of words that refers to any sensory

experience". Meanwhile Perrine (1969: 54) states that "Imagery may be defined as the representative through language of sense experience. Poetry appeals directly to our senses, of course, through its music and rhythm, which we actually hear when it is read aloud". There are some kinds of imagery and the writer finds two kind imagery that dominate in this poem that is visual imagery and organic imagery. Visual imagery according to Perrine (1969) "Represent a sight. Visual imagery is using descriptions to create a scene for the reader". Organic imagery according to Perrine (1969) is that "Represent internal sensation. Organic imagery is a description of a physical sensation and also emotion such as hunger, thirst, pain or fatigue, fear, etc."

3.2. Extrinsic Elements

The author finds the extrinsic element in the poem *You And Your Whole Race* by Langston Hughes is racial discrimination that has hit black people in the United States

3.2.1. Discrimination

The definition of discrimination is elaborated by Augoustinos (2010:12) is "Discrimination, which consists of treating people differently from others based primarily on membership in a social group". Robert A Rothman in his book *Inequality and Stratification: Class, Color, and Gender* said that "Inequality is patterned rather than random" (1993:2).

Discrimination that happens based on a race is called racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is unfair treatment against someone or a group of people based on their race. National Research Council in Measuring Racial Discrimination states that "racial discrimination occurs when a member of one racial group is treated less favorably than a similarly situated member of another racial group and suffers adverse or negative consequences" (2004: 40).

Australian Human Rights Commission state that "racial discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favorably than another person in a similar situation because of their race, color, descent, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status" (2014: 202).

DISCUSSION

The poem “You and Your Whole Race” tells the racial segregation to African-American which makes the black people difficult to live in United States of America. The poem was written by Langston in early 1920’s in America when racial discrimination are oppressed the African-American. The poem expresses the suffering the black because of it. In this paper, the writer analyzes the intrinsic and extrinsic elements to understand the racial discrimination and criticism to the black society in United States.

4.1. Intrinsic Elements

There are two intrinsic elements in “You and Your Whole Race” , it is metaphor and imagery.

4.1.1. Metaphor

“That such stupid ignorance breeds children there” (line 7)

The blacks had already been being discriminated by the whites for a long time. They are used to live under the shadow and choose to accept the unfair treatment to them. Therefore, when they had children, they were unable to teach their children to changes to get a better life, better education, or spirit to speak for their freedom

“Behind such humble shelters of despair—“(line 8)

A shelter is usually a safe place like a house that gives the occupant time for rest and refresh their mind. Here, however the shelters were pressure the occupant with despair because the blacks still hiding from the discrimination and did nothing.

4.1.2. Imagery

“look down upon white folks” (line 4)

Line 4 is visual imagery. Langston uses term the white folks to describe the white people in the United States. The author asked the blacks to see the whites, how they could be better than them in every aspect, in education, job, and many more.

“Look down upon the town in which you live” (line 2)

“And upon yourselves” (line 5)

Line 2 and 5 are visual imagery. The author wants the blacks to see with their eye how the life in the city, that is very different from the blacks life that was still desperate in poverty.

“And be ashamed” (line 3)

The underlined word is organic imagery which represents internal sensation. Reader can feel how ashamed to be black people that they were lack of everything until they could be ashamed after they saw the city and the white folks had better life in every aspect compare to them.

4.2. Extrinsic Elements

The writer found that racial discrimination is the extrinsic element in *You and Your Whole Race*. Unlike the other poem about racial discrimination, Langston is also criticize the African-American it self.

4.2.1. Discrimination

The black got terrorized by white people and racial segregation was made everywhere. Because the black people suffer in United States, Langston uses this poem to tell how discrimination were blocking their way to live their life, pull their dreams off because the law did not support them. It can be seen how the white put the black to the second social class or the proletariat for works for them.

“You and your whole race.” (line 1)
“Look down upon the town in which you live” (line 2)
“And be ashamed” (line 3)

From the discussion, it is know that Langston is pointing to the blacks in America, we can see from the line that when the black looked down to the town were they ashamed because their life was being discriminated and desperate. There was big social gap between the blacks life and the other society life.

“Look down upon white folks” (line 4)
“And upon yourselves” (line 5)
“And be ashamed” (line 6)

In this line it can be seen how the black felt ashamed when they saw the whites because the whites had higher social status, and the whites always treated the blacks unfairly.

“That such supine poverty exists there,” (line 7)

“That such stupid ignorance breeds children there” (line 8)
“Behind such humble shelters of despair—” (line 9)

From the lines, it can be known that the black condition was very tragic, that there was great poverty everywhere. The children, one of their hope to changes their life, did not get better education or the spirit of changes.

“That you yourselves have not the sense to care” (line 10)
“Nor the manhood to stand up and say” (line 11)

The blacks are afraid to leave their comfort zone as second class of society under the white. No one had the will to face the discrimination, to speak up about equality, and fight for their freedom. Even if there were some successful black people, most of them choose not to care about the freedom of their race.

“I dare you to come one step nearer, evil world,” (line 12)
“With your hands of greed seeking to touch my throat,” (line 13)
“I dare you to come one step nearer me:” (line 14)
“When you can say that” (line 15)
“you will be free!” (line 16)

From line 12 to line 16, the author challenges the blacks to step forward, brave to faces changes, because who else was going to fight for the freedom of African-American. Even though they were afraid to speak up, the poem asked to keep supporting the one who had enough to face the unfair treatment to the blacks.

CONCLUSION

From the poem “You and your whole race” by Langston Hughes, the author found the intrinsic elements are metaphor, visual imagery, and organic imagery. The author also found the extrinsic element in the poem to be racial discrimination and criticism of black people themselves. It can be seen how the African-American people at that time were suffering because of the discrimination, not only physical torture, but it impacts to their future that the chance to be equal was blocked because of the discrimination. No matter what the skin color was or any difference between the black and the white, everyone must be treated same one another because they all had the same right, human right. Langston Hughes perfectly and beautifully deliver to us the meaning of the poem so the reader can get to know the black feelings at that time. Hughes also criticized the attitude of black people who did not fight segregation and they tended to accept the situation.

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